

Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4501

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 5252

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BR, MX

SUBJECT: WELL-INFORMED NEWSPAPER PROMISES SOBER STAY FOR ECHEVERRIA

1. UNDER HEADLINE "LUIS ECHEVERRIA WILL HAVE A SOBER

AND ROUTINE PROGRAM IN BRAZIL," THE WELL-CONNECTED JORNAL DO BRASIL JULY 15 PUBLISHED A STORY NOTWORTHY FOR ITS ACERB AND ALMOST HOSTILE TONE.

2. THE STORY BEGINS, "THE MEXICAN TRADITION OF TRANSFORMING ANY TRIP OF ITS PRESIDENT INTO SPECTACULAR POLITICAL TRIUMPHS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE WILL GRIND TO A HALT IN BRASILIA ON THE 23RD, IN A DISCREET AND ROUTINE PROGRAM SET UP FOR THE STAY OF MR.LUIS ECHEVERRIA." DESPITE THE LARGE ENTOURAGE OF ACCOMPANYING MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES, THE STORY CONTINUES, "PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND HIS FOREIGN MINISTER, EMILIO RABASA, ARE GOING TO ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES IN EXTRACTING FROM BRASILIA THE IMAGE OF THE TRIMPHANT RECEPTIONS WHICH THE PROPAGANDA MACHINE OF THE PRI--SOLE MEXICAN PARTY--

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IS ACCUSTOMED TO TRANSMIT TO MEXICO FOR EACH TRIP ABROAD

OF THE CHIEF OF STATE." NOTING THAT IN BRASILIA THE PEOPLE DO NOT TAKE TO THE STREETS, THE STORY ASSERTS THAT ECHEVERRIA "RUNS THE RISK" OF MAKING THE TRIP TO THE CENTER OF TOWN "WITHOUT SEEING ANYBODY ALONG THE WAY, EXCEPT OCCASIONAL TRANSIENTS AND THE POLICEMEN POSTED THERE BY OBLIGATION." THE PAPER ADDS THAT "BECAUSE OF THE PARTICULAR PERSONAL STYLE OF GENERAL ERNESTO GEISEL, THE MEXICAN VISITOR ALSO WILL ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES IN GIVING ANY EXTRA SIGNIFICANCE TO THE OFFICIAL AGREEMENTS."

3. THE STORY ASSERTS THAT THE PRINCIPAL BRAZILIAN INTEREST WILL BE IN STRESSING "THEMES OF BILATERAL INTEREST, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE NECESSITY OF BETTER MEANS OF COMMUNICATION." THUS, THE STORY CONTINUES, THE TRIP WILL HELP TO ESTABLISH "A MARITIME LINE TO TRANSPORT THE CARGO GENERATED BY BILATERAL TRADE, BREAKING THE VICIOUS CIRCLE CREATED BY THE BINOMIUM LACK OF TRADE--LACK OF TRANSPORT" (FYI: THE REFERENCE IS TO THE ASSERTION RECENTLY CIRCULATING HERE THAT THERE IS NO TRADE BECAUSE THERE IS NO TRANSPORT, AND THERE IS NO TRANSPORT BECAUSE THERE IS NOTRADE. END FYI.).

4. "IN HIS BAGGAGE," THE JORNAL CONTINUES, ECHEVERRIA WILL BE BRINGING THE TEXT OF HIS ECONOMIC CHARTER, DUBBED "A MORE ECLECTIC VERSION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE ECONOMIC SECURITY DEFENDED BY BRAZIL IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS IN THE AMBIT OF THE UNITED NATIONS." THE STORY ASSERTS THAT THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NO PROBLEMS WITH THE ECHEVERRIA DOCUMENT "EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT, IN THE SEARCH FOR GREATER INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT, IT HAS SUFFERED CONCESSIONS WHICH RATHER DILUTED ITS CONTENT. NOW, THROUGH THE INSISTENCE OF THE MEXICAN FOREIGN MINISTER, PRESIDENT GEISEL WILL INCLUDE IN THE JOINT DECLARATION SOME EXPRESS REFERENCE OR REPRODUCTION OF THE PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF THE CHARTER DRAFTED BY HIS COLLEAGUE ECHEVERRIA."

5. AFTER NOTING THE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF MEXICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE RECENTLY IN BRASILIA, THE JORNAL CONCLUDES THAT THE "PRINCIPAL CONCERN" OF THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT HAS TO DO WITH AVOIDING, "UNDER THE PRETEXT OF THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, THE REPETITION IN
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BRASILIA OF THE EVENTS WHICH SURROUNDED" THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN MEXICO.

6. COMMENT: THIS LAST REFERENCE IS A CRACK AT THE AGGRANDIZEMENT OF ECHEVERRIA BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT DURING THE CONFERENCE, IN PARTICULAR THE CALL FOR ALL THE FOREIGN MINISTERS TO GREET HIM AT THE AIRPORT UPON HIS RETURN FROM EUROPE. OVERALL, THE STORY RINGS TRUE AS A

REFLECTION OF ON-GOING BRAZILIAN RESENTMENT AGAINST THE EFFORTS OF MEXICO IN GENERAL, AND ECHEVERRIA IN PARTICULAR, TO PROPEL THEMSELVES INTO A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP OF THE HEMISPHERE. THERE IS ALSO ENDIMIC RESENTMENT HERE AGAINST MEXICO'S EXTERNAL SUPPORT OF "LEFTIST" INTERNATIONAL POLICIES, AND AGAINST WHAT ARE SEEN HERE AS MEXICAN ASSERTIONS OF A MORALLY SUPERIOR POLITICAL SYSTEM. AS PART OF THE COVERAGE IN ADVANCE OF THE ECHEVERRIA VISIT, VARIOUS PRESS ACCOUNTS HAVE INCLUDED INDICTMENTS OF THE PRI'S PREDOMINANCE. ADDITIONALLY, ECHEVERRIA'S REPORTED REMARK THAT MEXICO WAS CLOSER POLITICALLY TO VENEZUELA, ALTHOUGH IT HAD GREATER ECONOMIC TIES WITH BRAZIL, GENERATED SHARP CRITICISM OF THE MEXICAN POLITICAL MODEL, BY COMMENTATORS PLUMPING FOR MORE OPENESS IN BRAZIL, AS ONE TOO SIMILAR TO BRAZIL AT THE MOMENT, AND THUS AS ONE TO BE AVOIDED RATHER THAN EMULATED. THESE RESENTMENTS HAVE ALSO FOUND EXPRESSION IN SMALLER WAYS: A POLITICAL GOSSIP COLUMNIST, NOTING THE SIZE OF THE ACCOMPANYING ENTOURAGE, COMMENTED RECENTLY TO THE EFFECT THAT WE WOULD BE UP TO OUR HIPS IN COMBREROS. WHILE THESE RESENTMENTS ARE REAL ENOUGH, HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE PROGRAM FOR ECHEVERRIA, AND THE COURTESIES EXTENDED TO HIM, WILL FULLY MEET INTERNATIONAL NORMS OF PROTOCOL AND HOSPITALITY. IT HAS ALREADY BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT A STAMP WILL BE ISSUED COMMEMORATING HIS VISIT.

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